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ABSTRACT

The REP contract with the National Institute of Education was through November 30, 1975. Under the contract terms the REP was to develop a set of RFD Strategies to strengthen the problem-solving capacities of rural school systems, communities, classrooms, and families. Defined as community, school, learner, support agency, and family centered, each strategy was composed of processes and products intended for use by local problem solvers or by state and regional agencies who could support local efforts. By November 30, 1974, several important considerations had prompted various modifications in the original scope of work. These included: discontinuation of the learner and family centered components; integration of the community, school, and family centered components; arrangement for a site for installing the integrated strategy; procurement of a second field test site; development of an evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which the strategy could produce desired outcomes; and addition of a diffusion planning component. As of November 30, 1975, the integrated RFD Strategy was being installed in a field site in Southeastern Utah; proto-type versions of the six specified products had been developed; the specifications for a seventh product had been prepared; a second field test site had been procured in Northeastern Washington; the evaluation plan had been developed; and a nine-state diffusion effort had been initiated. (NQ)

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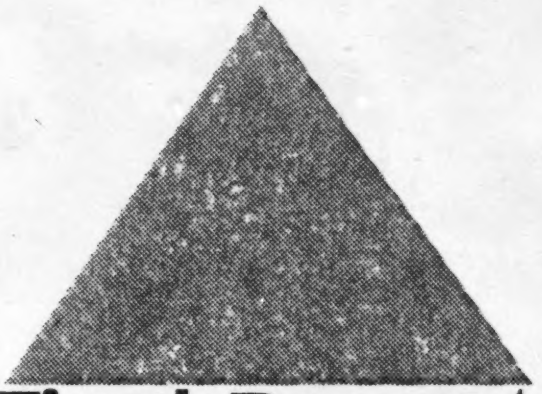

Final Report

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FINAL REPORT

to

The School Capacity for Problem Solving Group

National Institute of Education

Charles L. Thompson, Project Officer

Relative to

NIE Contract NE-C-00-3-0074

Completed November 30, 1975

Rural Education Program

Rowan C. Stutz, Director

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue
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January 16, 1976

OVERVIEW

Effective March 1, 1973, the Rural Education Program (REP) of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory signed a multi-year contract through November 30, 1975, with the National Institute of Education. Under the terms of this contract the Rural Education Program began developing a set of Rural Futures Development (RFD) Strategies aimed at strengthening the problem-solving capacities of rural school systems, communities, classrooms, and families. In the 1973 Basic Program Plans, these strategies were defined as Community Centered, School Centered, Learner Centered, Support Agency Centered, and Family Centered. Each strategy aimed at a different target system but was tied to the others by undergirding principles, values, and approaches to change. Each strategy was composed of processes and products intended for use by local problem solvers or by state and regional agencies who could support local people's efforts.

However, by November 30, 1974, several important considerations prompted a number of modifications in this original Scope of Work. Some of these considerations were: (1) a need to integrate the Community-Centered, School-Centered, and Support Agency-Centered strategies; (2) NIE's growing interest in a successful installation of the integrated strategies; (3) the need to plan a diffusion effort; (4) the impact of unanticipated high inflation rates on budgets; and (5) a 15 percent reduction in NIE funding.

As a result, the Rural Education Program discontinued development of the Learner-Centered and Family-Centered components and integrated the Community-Centered, School-Centered, and Family-Centered components.

Simultaneously, a site for installing the integrated strategy was arranged through contracts with the Utah State Board of Education and the San Juan School District in Southeastern Utah. The Scope of Work statement also included the procurement of a second field test site by November 30, 1975, and the development of an evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which the Strategy could produce desired outcomes. In addition, a diffusion planning component was added to the Scope of Work for 1975.

These changes in the original contract were presented in a document entitled Revision to Resource Allocation and Management Plans for FY 75, October 31, 1974, and were subsequently approved by NIE.

In September of 1975, the Rural Education Program requested a change in the nature of the program's diffusion efforts. A change order dated October 16, 1975, authorized us to begin making arrangements with state agencies for a diffusion effort in nine Northwest and intermountain states.

As will be reported in greater detail under appropriate headings in this report, the work required under terms of contract NE-C-00-3-0074 and modified by the 1974 revisions and the subsantive change order has essentially been accomplished. The one exception was our inability to procure the second field test site (Site B) by the date specified in the Scope of Work Statement. This delay in obtaining a site also delayed the development of the Site B Evaluation Plan. This modification in timelines, however, was authorized by the NIE Project Officer in a technical direction memorandum dated September 9, 1975.

In summary then, as of November 30, 1975, the integrated RFD Strategy is being installed in a field site in Southeastern Utah; prototype versions of the six products specified in the contract have been developed; the specifications for a seventh product, the Support Agency Guide, have been prepared; a second field test site has been procured in Northeastern Washington; an evaluation plan for measuring degree of implementation and outcomes has been developed; and a nine-state diffusion effort has been initiated.

RFD PRODUCTS

Seven RFD products were developed under our recently completed contract with NIE:

School-Community Process Products

- RFD Guide for Training School-Community Process Facilitators
- RFD Manual for School-Community Process Facilitators
- RFD Guide for Schools
- RFD Guide for School Boards
- RFD Notebook for School-Community Groups

Support Agency Process Products

- RFD Guide for Support Agencies

RFD Strategy Products

- RFD Strategy Descriptions

All are planned for completion in 1977, and all resulted from work begun in 1973 or earlier.

By November 30, 1973, the Rural Education Program completed a feasibility search and operational plan to guide development of the School Strategy and products and preliminary versions of Community Strategy materials were being tried out in various field situations. In addition, work was begun on the Support Agency Strategy Operational Plan.

During 1974 the Rural Education Program approved specifications for each School-Community Process product, and the operational plan was completed for the Support Agency Strategy. Preliminary versions of the RFD Strategy Descriptions were tried out in various field situations.

In 1975, the five School-Community Process products were written, reviewed by program colleagues, and revised. An exploratory test of each product was conducted, using a review panel of qualified experts and potential users, and results of the testing were compiled and analyzed. The five products were revised on the basis of exploratory test results, colleague and consultant comments, new data from the literature, and developer insight. Each product was edited, and all design and illustration work was completed. Quality assurance procedures, such as colleague or program/division director review, were carried out at each step in this process. Manuscript preparation and printing are soon to be completed, giving us the prototypes of these five RFD products.

While products were being developed, a group of interim materials was prepared for use in installing the RFD Strategy in Site A, Utah. These materials will be surveyed during the next contract period to decide if and how they should become parts of the final products.

Several new RFD Strategy Descriptions were developed in 1975, tried out in field situations, and revised. This bank of materials explains RFD to different populations in varying degrees of detail. As planned, support agency staff can use these products as models for their own materials development.

Finally, specifications were completed for a two-volume RFD Guide for Support Agencies, one volume for regional level and one for state level. Work is proceeding on the development of this product.

SITE A INSTALLATION

While the Rural Education Program has tried out parts of the RFD Strategy in a variety of field settings (Healy and Juneau in Alaska, Neah Bay and Okanogan Valley in Washington, and the Montana State Education Agency in Helena, Montana) the project in Utah is the first installation of the Integrated Strategy. In Utah (Site A), four process facilitators are being trained to work with local school boards, school staffs, and four school-community groups in the San Juan County School District. Two state education agency staff members are being trained as process facilitator trainers and the state education agency is receiving technical assistance in planning the organization, staff, and resource development needed to incorporate the RFD Strategy as a regular SEA function.

The process facilitator training is being done over a 22-month period and will be completed in June 1976. The formal training events are on schedule. Ten have been held with four yet to be held.

Because Site A serves as the setting for the first tryout of the integrated strategy it serves several important purposes: (1) to aid the development staff in refining the integrated strategy prior to its use in Site B, (2) to assist the installation staff to refine the process facilitator training and SEA technical assistance procedures, materials, and skills, (3) to try out the RFD products in an actual operating situation, (4) to aid the evaluation staff in designing a Site B evaluation plan by trying out alternative evaluation procedures and instruments.

SITE B INSTALLATION

As mentioned in the Overview section of this report, there was considerable delay in making the necessary field arrangements for a Site B in which to test the integrated strategy. However, by the end of the contract period (November 30) agreements had been made with the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction to pilot the RFD Strategy in six rural school districts in one of the twelve Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in that state.

Site B will serve several important purposes: (1) determine the degree to which the full model can be employed in various settings, (2) assess the extent to which the Strategy's outcome objectives can be met, and (3) identify any significant unanticipated consequences of participation in the School-Community Process.

Even with the delay in arranging for a Site B, it appears that these purposes can be accomplished by November 30, 1977.

EVALUATION

Assessment is considered to be an integral part of development by the Rural Education Program. Therefore, evaluation activities paralleled development activities during the previous three-year contract with NIE.

During 1973 and part of 1974, evaluation efforts focused on an exploratory-pilot-field test sequence for the processes and products of five RFD Strategies: Community Centered, School Centered, Learner Centered, Support Agency Centered, and Family Centered. Exploratory and pilot testing of various components of the Strategies is documented in numerous complete and incomplete reports.

As a result of a proposal to NIE, an additional contract (NIE-C-74-0110) was granted to the Rural Education Program. This contract was for the development and initial testing of an instrument to measure how schools manifest five basic functions of schooling. These functions are selection, custody-control, evaluation-certification, instruction, and socialization. The instrument, a student questionnaire, was developed and two initial tests of the questionnaire were conducted. Upon further refinement, the instrument has potential for assessing and tracking the effects of school improvement efforts such as the RFD Strategy upon ways in which schools carry out these functions. A copy of the final report for this contract is being sent under separate cover.

A new approach was required of evaluation with the decision to integrate the separate strategies and field test a single, comprehensive RFD Strategy. This approach has three parts: exploratory testing of

RFD products and evaluation of the RFD Strategy as it is installed in two successive field sites, A and B.

Exploratory testing of five RFD products was planned in 1974 and conducted in 1975. These products are:

RFD Guide for Training School-Community Process Facilitators

RFD Manual for School-Community Process Facilitators

RFD Guide for Schools

RFD Guide for School Boards

RFD Notebook for School-Community Groups

The Exploratory Test Plan and an Exploratory Test Report for each product documents this work. Test results were used as a major data source in preparing prototype versions of each of these products.

Site A evaluation is designed to provide data about the treatment: Are there gaps or redundancies in the RFD Strategy? Which events and processes are essential, which supplemental?

Site B will provide evidence about the degree to which RFD was implemented and the extent to which Strategy outcomes were met. Detailed plans for these field tests are contained in three documents:

Evaluation Plan--Overview and Instrument Development Plan

Evaluation Plan--Site A

Evaluation Plan--Site B

So far, six evaluation site visits have been conducted in Site A for the purposes of data collection and instrument tryout. Two of these visits and supporting evaluation activities are described in the first

Semiannual Evaluation Report (January 1975), one in the Second Semiannual Evaluation Report (August 1975), and the data from the other three site visits will be described in the third semiannual report now being written.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Rural Education Program

National Institute of Education Contract No. NE-C-00-3-0074

Preliminary Final Contract Cost Report

as of November 30, 1975

	Costs	Budget	Variance
Staff Salaries	$ 1,459,035	$ 1,380,855	$ <78,180>
Personnel Benefits	273,245	255,208	<18,037>
Consultant Claims	62,658	174,097	111,439
Travel and Transportation	125,703	187,225	61,522
Postage and Shipping	12,001	10,012	<1,989>
Rent and Telephone	212,243	199,778	<12,465>
Printing and Duplication	72,102	101,498	29,396
Subcontracts	142,110[1]	38,432	<103,678>
Other Services	25,221	21,669	<3,552>
Supplies and Materials	39,191	49,918	10,727
Equipment	12,638	28,203	15,565
Total Direct Costs	$ 2,436,147	$ 2,446,895	$ 10,748
Indirect Costs	494,728	497,561	2,833
Total Costs	$ 2,930,875	$ 2,944,456	$ 13,581
Credits	<2,026>	<30,084>	<28,058>
Fixed Fee	131,147	131,147	-0-
TOTAL	$ 3,059,996[1]	$ 3,045,519	$ <14,477>

1. Amount is tentative pending the final cost report on a cost reimbursement subcontract with Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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January 23, 1976

Mr. William Sullivan
Office of Contract/Grants Management
National Institute of Education
Room 720, 1832 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20208

Re: NE-C-00-3-0074

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

In accordance with Clause No. 20(e)(1) of the General Provisions of the subject contract, we certify that there have been no inventions as a result of this contract.

Sincerely,

Rowan Stutz
Program Director

Joe W. Jones, Director
Division of Administrative Services

RS/JWJ/mds

cc: Robert R. Rath